

# DILIGENCE

## SHORE TIES



Edition 05-01  
February 2005

*SO...WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO ALL THIS TIME?*

*Courage ... Honor ... Tenacity*



Petty Officer Matthew Gross makes First Class.



LT Eric Hatcher and BM2 Matthew Rogers relax on the bridge.



EM2 Dan Orlando and ET2 Eric Yermal anxiously awaiting their first customers.



GM2 Robert Harris, "Guns", wonders how he found himself in the galley.



DC2 Matthew Lassiter prepares to cut some pizza on 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Pizza night.



DCI J. W. Hickerson and DC2 Matthew Stewart test out the ship's wash-down system.

*Courage ... Honor ... Tenacity*



ENS Brian Lied and SN Alonzo Rempesent battle it out in the heavyweight division.



SK3 Ivan Alvarado prepared for a visit to steel beach (a.k.a. the flight deck).



Swim Call - No one wants to be the first one.



FS2 Laron Hough officiates as SN Brian Hayes and ET3 Erik Sears compete in the lightweight division.



←DCI Jim Hickerson catches a Grouper during fish call.

## OPERATIONS



Since departing Wilmington on January 24<sup>th</sup>, U. S. Coast Guard Cutter DILIGENCE has been busy operating in the area of water between Cuba, Haiti and the Bahamas, known as the Windward Pass. Over the past several weeks, DILIGENCE has been monitoring and boarding Haitian sail vessels (such as the one pictured above) destined for the Bahamas and the U.S. In 3 boardings, DILIGENCE has deterred over 65 illegal migrants that may have otherwise reached the U.S. illegally. In addition to these three boardings, DILIGENCE has utilized its Coast Guard presence to deter other Haitian vessels from illegally entering the Bahamas and the U.S.



← Haitians are given life jackets for their safety as they are directed back to Haiti.





←DILIGENCE members board the Haitian sail freighter to determine the safety of the vessel and how many persons are on board.

DILIGENCE occasionally patrols → close to land displaying the U.S. flag, thereby deterring Haitians from departing.



←DILIGENCE's small boat approaches a Haitian motor vessel to conduct a boarding.



DILIGENCE conducted a routine boarding of this small cargo freighter. IT2 Justin Gagnon → standing security on his first boarding.



## FROM THE BRIDGE WING

Dear Friends and Families of DILIGENCE,

I'm writing as we've sailed past the halfway point in our patrol with a downwind run to go. In past newsletters I've written about the bad weather and rough seas we've had to endure. Well that's not the case this time. Considering it's February back in Wilmington, you may not be pleased to hear that we've been enjoying mostly calm seas and temperatures ranging from 72-80. At night when the breeze picks up a bit, the wind chill sometimes drops into the sixties, actually forcing some of us to put on sweatshirts. Brrrr....



We've had a very busy patrol so far, though not for the reason we expected. Our primary mission down here is to stop the illegal flow of migrants from Haiti but we've seen very few vessels coming out of Haiti. This may be a result of the work being done in Haiti by the U. S. Navy to help rebuild the infrastructure following the devastating hurricanes that hit the country last summer. Perhaps their contributions are giving the Haitians hope for a better life. I can't say for sure, but whatever the cause, our migrant interdiction business is down. Best of all, we haven't seen any dangerously overloaded vessels as we have in the past - like the 40-foot vessel with 233 migrants aboard that we stopped LAST February.

So why have we been busy? We've been training, running exercises and practicing drills to get the crew sharp for our NEXT patrol when we'll visit Little Creek, Virginia (near Norfolk) for what's called "TACT." It's not TACT - like being nice to the cable company worker after the TV's been out for 3 days - it's actually an acronym for Tailored Annual Cutter Training. It's a 15-day period where the ship runs through every single emergency exercise or evolution that we may have to do. From responding to a toxic gas leak to towing, from fire drills to flooding drills, we'll conduct more than TWO HUNDRED exercises in that two-week period IN ADDITION to sending many of our crewmembers to special training in firefighting and damage control. It's a very busy time and it's so important that we have to pass an inspection in order to be allowed to go. THAT's why we've been so busy this patrol. We've been going through more lists than Santa Claus to make sure we have all our equipment and that it's in good shape.

When we haven't been getting ready for TACT, we've boarded six vessels, held a swim call, conducted nearly a hundred flight operations, held a fish call, escorted 3 Haitian vessels back to port, held an arm-wrestling tournament, transported a migrant to Guantanamo, held a Spades tournament and plenty more but I'll leave some news for your DILIGENCE sailor to tell you about.

As you may have heard, our planned port call at the end of the patrol wasn't working out and might have been cancelled completely. We're very grateful to our boss for allowing us to return home early in lieu of that port call. We're looking forward to being back at 109 N. Water Street two days earlier than originally scheduled.

Thanks so much to all of you for all your support, assistance, counsel, prayers and good wishes. It's incredibly important to every one of us.

Take care,

CDR Andy Blomme



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